

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated October 18, 2004. Claims 1-11 and 14-22 are pending in the application. Claim 13 is canceled by this amendment. Claims 1, 2, 7, 8 and 11 have been amended. Claims 14-22 have been added. Support for the amendments as well as the added claims can be found throughout the specification and drawings, notably on pp. 6-7, ¶¶ 31-33 and in FIG. 11. Applicants submit that no new matter or issues have been introduced.

Claims 1-5 and 7-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Ehrenfeld (USPN 5,156,619). Claims 12-13 have been canceled. Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite, *inter alia*, a “tubular portion including a decreased diameter portion prior to commencement of said end formation.” Such a feature is not disclosed, taught or suggested by Ehrenfeld and therefore, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested. The remaining rejected claims are dependent on claim 1 and therefore appear to be allowable. New dependent claims 14-17 are also dependent on claim 1 and therefore appear to be allowable. New independent claims 18 and 21 include limitations that are neither disclosed, taught or suggested by Ehrenfeld and therefore each, along with claims 19-20 and 22 dependent respectively thereon, also appear to be allowable.

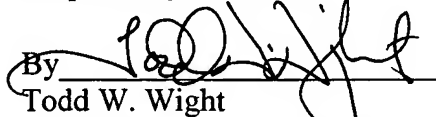
Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ehrenfeld. In view of the above remarks, claim 6 is dependent on a claim that appears to be allowable and therefore withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 297912001602. However, the Commissioner is not authorized to charge the cost of the issue fee to the Deposit Account.

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Respectfully submitted,

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